



The Papacy in the Modern World: A Political History

Frank J. Coppa

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In March 2013, millions of people sat glued to news channels and live Internet feeds, waiting to see white smoke rise from the Sistine Chapel, signaling the election of the new pope. For two millennia, the papacy, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, has played a fundamentally important role in European history and world affairs. Transcending the religious realm, it has influenced ideological, philosophical, social, and political developments, as well as international relations. Considering the broad role of the papacy from the end of the eighteenth century to the present, this original history explores the reactions and responses it has evoked and its confrontation with and accommodation of the modern world.

Frank J. Coppa describes the triumphs, controversies, and failures of the popes over the past two hundred years—including Pius IX, who was criticized for his campaign against Italian unification and his proclamation of papal infallibility; Pius XII, denounced for his silence during the Holocaust and impartiality during World War II; and John XXIII, who was praised for his call to update the Church and for convoking the Second Vatican Council. Examining a wide variety of sources, some only recently made available by the Vatican archives, *The Papacy in the Modern World* sheds new light on this institution and offers valuable insights into events previously shrouded in mystery.

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